

**PAPA OLA LOKAHI
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November 16, 1999

Assistant Secretary John Berry
c/o Document Management Unit
The Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW Mailstop-7229
Washington, D.C. 20240
FAX: (202)219-1790

Dear Secretary Berry,

Papa Ola Lokahi (POL) is a consortium of Native Hawaiian non-profit organizations and public agencies concerned about the continuing health and wellness issues related to Native Hawaiians and dedicated to improving their current poor health status. The organization is part of the federal government's health initiative as defined in the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (P.L. 100-579). Attached for your review is an expanded discussion of Papa Ola Lokahi and its past and current efforts.

An integral part of the federal health initiative also includes the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems (NHHCS) which are community-based, Native Hawaiian health organizations tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the IRC. These health care systems form a state-wide network for health care service delivery for all Native Hawaiians and their families. Each Native Hawaiian Health Health Care Systems has one or more of the major Hawaiian islands as its service area.

A final part of the federal initiative is the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (NHHSP) which has, since 1991, provided scholarship assistance to 92 Native Hawaiians entering into health professions including medicine, nursing, social work, clinical psychology, dentistry, etc.

The impacts of Papa Ola Lokahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems, and the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program is appended as ATTACHMENT 1 for your review.

In your reconciliation discussion, we would hope and strongly

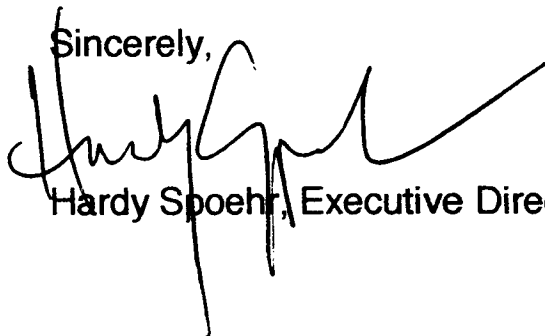
recommend that health and health care be intricate parts of your discussion. Many of the issues today are a direct result of past historical actions which have negatively impacted on Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian communities. On-going health disparities are clearly part of this. Appended as ATTACHMENT 2 are the major health disparities currently identified in Native Hawaiian health

Much as the justification for health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives today is based on 19th century land settlements and social concerns, so, too, could health care and wellness activities be extended to Native Hawaiians today. The specific ways in which this could be achieved, however, need further discussions.

Finally, we would hope that you might consider representatives from Papa Ola Lokahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems, and the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program as part of your panel discussion relating the Native Hawaiian health on December 10th or 11th.

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to comment. Our final testimony will be much more extensive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hardy Spoehr', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hardy Spoehr, Executive Director

cc: Executive Directors, NHHCS
Director, NHHSP
Placement Director, NHHSP